

**Blackhall Primary School Parent Council**  
**Meeting - 20 September 2023**  
**Minutes**

**Members Present**

Willie Malcolm	P1 rep	Colin Chisholm	Treasurer
	P2 rep	Kate Walker	Secretary
Chloe Riddell	P3 rep	Jane Browning	Chair
Emily Orr	P4 rep	Ian Cameron	Vice -Chair
Sine Munro	P5 rep		
Caroline Irvine	P6 rep		
	P7 rep		
Tashya Abhay	ASN Rep		

**Other Attendees**

Kirsty Martin	Head Teacher	Hal Osler	Councillor
Andrew Gardner	Acting Depute Head Teacher	Clare Lacey	PSA Rep

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies were noted from Julia Pearson (P2 Rep), Linda Rennie (P7 Rep), and Councillor Max Mitchell. It was noted that the PSA would provide office holders to attend the Parent Council on an alternating basis.

**2. Confirmation of 2023-24 members**

Members not elected at the AGM were co-opted.

**3. Brief introductions**

All members introduced themselves to the group.

**4. Reminder of approach for parents and carers engaging the school and Parent Council**

The Chair reminded all members that the Parent Council was a forum for constructive discussion and identifying priorities for the school, rather than complaints. It would be helpful if members let the Chair/Head Teacher know of any matters to be raised in advance of the meeting so that the Head Teacher had time to consider and respond. The Chair offered to help triage any issues received if that would be helpful. The guidance document on how to engage the school and Parent Council would be circulated with the minutes.

**5. Head Teacher Report**

The presentation is included as an appendix to the minutes. The following points provide additional information to the slides.

### *Staffing*

Depute Head Teacher – Gail Middlemiss is expected to return in January. Andrew Gardner has been appointed as acting Depute until Gail returns.

The school currently has two PSA vacancies but is hoping to fill one of them soon via a recruitment process.

### *Session so far*

Assemblies have been moved to a Wednesday now to maximise learning time on a Friday morning. The Head Teacher and Acting Depute Head are running a “Bingo Ball” system whereby, every other Wednesday, two pupils from each class can come and discuss their learning with them.

### *Upcoming Events – Parent Consultations*

Parent Consultations will be on 3 and 5 October and will be held in the large hall again, with classrooms being open during this time to allow parents to walk round and see their children’s work as well.

### *Industrial Action*

The industrial action taking place on 26-28 September was discussed. It was noted that this was outwith the school’s control and that guidance would be provided as and when the school received it. The plan was for one “live” Teams wellbeing check-in to take place every day (these would be staggered across classes to allow for families with multiple children and e.g. only one electronic device, to accommodate all of these).

### *RAAC (Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete)*

The school had been inspected for RAAC and all areas cleared with the exception of the small hall, where the inspection report was awaited. It is not expected that anything significant will be found but it was noted that the school could accommodate the small hall being out of use if it came to that.

### *School Improvement Plan (SIP)*

The School Improvement Plan is now on the website. Attainment continues to be a focus, particularly in respect of targeted learning/differentiation. Members noted that it would be helpful for the parent cohort to have more information on this and the Head Teacher undertook to provide this.

Parents should refer to the SIP for further information on current priorities.

**ACTION – Head Teacher** to provide Attainment Newsletter to parents.

## **6. Priorities for the year**

Upgrading the playing field surface has been under discussion within the school community for some time and it was agreed that it should be a priority to progress this now. An extremely costly quote for Astro-turf had been obtained (£140,000 plus annual maintenance of £2-3k). This would require significant fundraising and had associated problems such as the annual maintenance costs, expected lifespan and environmental impact. It was agreed that other options should be explored with a view

to identifying a shortlist of what the viable options were and discussing these at the next meeting. The Chair agreed to contact other Parent Council reps to ask if any of their schools had experience of upgrading a similar area and of what the options/costs had been. The P3 rep undertook to find out about re-turfing options and provide feedback.

## **ACTIONS**

**P3 rep** to provide feedback on re-turfing options.

**Chair and Head Teacher** to meet before next Parent Council meeting to discuss possible options that have been explored/put forward.

## **7. Updates from Year Reps**

There was discussion of sporting opportunities for P6 and 7 via EPSSA (Edinburgh Primary Schools Sports Association) events. The school has started a running club for P6/7 and pupils would be able to enter cross-country events.

It was noted that some parents would find more information at the start of the school year helpful – eg re indoor shoes, stationery etc. There was a lot of information at P1 entry but less in other years which could be difficult for new families. The Head Teacher advised that the School Handbook was currently being updated and would provide this information.

## **8. AOB**

### *School Uniform*

It was noted that Border Embroideries, who supply the school uniform, were now having quarterly sales. It was also noted that the school always had a lot of pre-loved uniform available.

### *Mobile Phone policy*

The Head Teacher clarified that mobile phones were not to be used by children on the school premises – if a child brings a mobile phone to school it should stay in their bag.

### *Parking*

Issues persist with parents parking discourteously or sometimes illegally. The Head Teacher and Councillors have received complaints about this and the Head Teacher has corresponded by email with the parent cohort. Police had recently been patrolling this. It was emphasised that such parking put children at risk by failing to allow for safe crossing spaces and also potentially weakened the case for other road safety measures being put in place.

### *PSA Update*

The PSA representative noted that they were prioritising funding of playground equipment and the pantomime this year (see PSA minutes). The School Autumn Fair takes place on 30 September and the PSA representative asked anyone who could volunteer to help with stalls to contact the PSA.

### *Meetings*

The Chair thanked everyone for attending. It was agreed that future meetings would be in person only rather than on Teams.

**Dates of future meetings:** Wednesday 29 November 2023  
Wednesday 21 February 2024  
Wednesday 8 May 2024  
AGM – to be confirmed (June 2024)